

Telecommunications Commission Minutes - August 27 2009

I. Call to Order

Chairman Terry Lottes called the meeting to order at 7:10 p.m. in the County Administration conference room in the Administration Center, located at 1300 Courthouse Road.

II. Roll Call

The following members were present: Terry Lottes, Thomas Kimbrell, Danielle Davis, and Jim Minor. Also in attendance was Marie Schuler representing Comcast, Paul Miller from Verizon and Gwen Sparks from Cox. Cathy Riddle, Public Information Office, and Jason Hill from IT, represented the County.

III. Presentations by the Public

There were no presentations by the public.

IV. Approval of Minutes

Mr. Kimbrell moved to approve the July 2009 minutes; Mr. Lottes seconded the motion. The minutes were approved.

V. Members' Concerns

Mr. Kimbrell asked about the status of Mr. Brian Jones and his situation in The Glens. Ms. Schuler said that Mr. Jones has service and that she had received two requests on August 27 from other residents who wanted service in that neighborhood.

VI. Agenda Additions

There were no agenda additions.

VII. New Business

Broadband

Ms. Riddle asked Mr. Hill to provide a brief update to the Commission on the County's pursuit of stimulus funds to assist in the County's broadband efforts.

Mr. Hill stated that the County did not file an application for the most recent round of stimulus funds under the Broadband Technology Opportunities Program because the County did not meet all of the program's requirements.

Mr. Lottes asked the cable providers for an update on confidentiality agreements. He said that the commission wanted the addresses of those subscribers who currently have cable service so that members can determine which areas of Stafford have service and which do not. Mr. Lottes

asked Ms. Riddle to draft three letters asking the cable providers to sign confidentiality agreements with the County regarding this information.

Mr. Kimbrell asked for an update on the survey that the Commission had previously discussed that would ask Stafford citizens if they had cable/Internet service and if not, whether they would like it in their neighborhood. He stated that if the cable providers would supply the information on their subscribers' addresses, then the survey may not be required.

Public Access

Ms. Knight stated that she had completed a draft of a business plan for public access and had sent it around to Telecommunications Commission members for their comments. She said that she did not receive a lot of feedback. She stated that she needed more information. She also stated that she needed to meet with Stafford school representatives to determine what facilities/equipment they had available for public access and what they would be willing to share.

She stated that Mr. Sullivan had met with school representatives and that they are interested in becoming stakeholders in the project.

Ms. Riddle offered to call Ms. Cottongim and set up a meeting with the school superintendent to further discuss this project.

Ms. Knight stated that there needs to be a Memo of Understanding (MOU) between the public entity and the government entity for a public access program. Ms. Knight also stated that the Commission's committee that is examining this issue discussed setting up a 501c3 non-profit organization to manage the public access programming.

Mr. Lottes stated that he would like to know more about 501c3 organizations.

Discussion then ensued on the use of the franchise fees and PEG funds that the County is currently receiving. Ms. Knight stated that the County could do more with those fees to establish public access programming. She also stated that the County is supposed to get money from satellite television providers.

After further discussion on the franchise fees and PEG funding, Ms. Knight stated that she would continue working on the business plans for public access and also research MOUs.

Mr. Kimbrell inquired about the amount of franchise fees and PEG fees the County receives each year.

Ms. Riddle offered to obtain copies of other County MOUs for the Commission to review.

VIII. Adjournment

At 8:12 p.m., Mr. Kimbrell moved to adjourn the meeting; Ms. Knight seconded the motion; it passed unanimously.

